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The Meaning of Infant Baptism

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In the lengthy, interesting and sometimes tedious history of theological debate one of the most warmly contested questions has been that of the propriety of infant baptism. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the arguments were frequent and there were times when the subject provoked continual discussion, as a glance at the relevant, contemporaneous literature shows. Within the range of our own experience the practice of baptizing those who have not reached maturity, whatever that age may be, has frequently been challenged and sometimes maligned. The response has been a voluminous literature in defense of the majority practice. The rapid growth of the undenominational churches which, for the greater part, have been Independent, Baptist and Fundamental has *ipso facto* intensified the discussion. Nor is it a problem peculiar to American Christianity. Our missionaries in the Orient and evangelical believers in Latin America testify to the seriousness of the problem in their fields of service. In Europe a lively discussion about the propriety of infant baptism has been running for at least a decade, and recent developments there give no indication that it is running down. Karl Barth's repudiation of the practice of infant baptism¹ from within the bosom of the Continental Reformed church gave the debate a fresh start and numerous incidents have kept it moving. The number of monographs written in reply to Barth in German, Dutch, French and English shows the great interest which the European, especially the Reformed, churches have in the problem.

One of the most significant recent developments is the action of the National Synod of the Reformed Church of France at its session of 1951. For some years the question of baptism had been agitating this large and influential communion of French-speaking people. In 1946 the National Synod of Lyons established a Commission on Baptism to study the questions that had arisen in the French Church. After debate in the presbyteries and regional synods the last national synod adopted a three page report which, because of its importance, should be of interest to sister communions throughout the Christian world. Concerning the importance of the action, one of the leading spirits of the French Reformed church predicted before the meeting of the synod that it would be one of the most important problems considered for a long time.² As for interest outside France, the synod of 1946 expressly instructed its commission to confer with leaders of other Reformed churches.³

Significant portions of the action of synod read, in part, as follows: "Synod . . . declares its attachment to the baptism of infants. But careful not to confine the

Reformed Church of France to a single practice inasmuch as the Word of God is not explicit on this point, it considers it legitimate that baptism *may be deferred* by parents for religious reasons until the time when, after having been instructed concerning its meaning, the person baptized demands it himself . . . The Reformed Church of France is a Church which baptizes the children of the faithful. However, the parents who so desire may present their children to God, agreeing to entrust them to the Church which receives them with a view to their religious instruction and their baptism . . . The pastors of the Reformed Church of France *ought to be willing to celebrate both infant baptism and their presentation*, according to the request of the families. Nevertheless each pastor actually exercising his ministry in the Reformed Church of France shall exercise care concerning the attitude which his convictions dictate to him at the time relative to baptism and presentation. On the other hand, the National Synod reserves the right to authorize a theological student or a pastor, who would not in conscience be able to baptize children or to present them, to exercise his ministry in the Reformed Church of France. No parish or region can exclude the one or the other practice . . . A National Synod will be called to pronounce finally on the nature and the content of the presentation and on its liturgy which ought, in its spirit and its form, to prevent all confusion between this act of worship and the sacrament of baptism."⁴ Having observed this development we venture to say that the French church has not seen the last of this discussion.

I

It is not our purpose in this paper, however, to comment on this development but rather to make inquiry concerning the meaning of infant baptism with the preceding material serving in an introductory capacity. The problem of the propriety of and the Biblical warrant for the practice of infant baptism is a serious one today. A problem of as great significance is the problem of the meaning of that rite when it is administered. What does baptism mean when administered to infants?

The answers to this question are usually three in number. There are those who affirm that baptism is the means of the child's regeneration. The Church of Rome speaks in this fashion. The Roman Catechism declares that baptism is the "sacrament of regeneration through water in the word," that in baptism original sin is removed and that the child receives spiritual grace. Some Lutherans and Anglicans teach virtually the same doctrine.

Another interpretation of the meaning of baptism when administered to children is that it signifies their

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covenant relationship but nothing more. Zwingli held this position. We have written elsewhere that "his theology in general, and his doctrine of grace in particular, is rationalistic and thereby loses emphases found in Scripture. In his early ministry Zwingli doubted the propriety of infant baptism altogether and advocated it only after the Anabaptists made it the prime object of their attack. When he did encourage the practice of baptizing infants he saw in it only a recognition of the fact that they are in the covenant and no other spiritual significance."⁶

What seems to us to be a superior position to either of the two above is the position held by John Calvin and a venerable succession of persons within the Reformed tradition. We call it *the Reformed position* because it was the position taken by the men who wrote our liturgy and creeds and is expressed in those writings. It is a position which mediates between the two described briefly above and says that the baptism of infants does not merely signify their inclusion within the covenant. If that were all that infant baptism means, it would bear a meaning different from the baptism of adults which signifies much more than that. Nor does infant baptism mean that the child is regenerated *through* the sacrament which contains the very grace which it signifies, conferring this grace *ex opere operato*. This mechanical conception, which guarantees that baptism is always effective when no obstacle is deliberately put in the way, is also an extreme position. The position which we believe to be the correct position is richer and more spiritual than that proposed by either Zwingli or Rome; it eschews the rationalistic over-simplification of the former, and contravenes the un-Biblical magic of the latter. It is the purpose of this paper to state what that position is and to demonstrate by an appeal to a number of sources that that is the position of The Church of Jesus Christ Reformed According to the Word of God.

Baptism has one and the same meaning whether administered to infant or to adult. There is not one office for baptism to be read when infants are baptized and another to be read when adults receive the rite. To be sure, there is a section in the office for baptism which pertains to the baptism of children and another which pertains to the baptism of adults, but—and this is the

important point—the meaning of the sacrament is the same when administered to either party. It is for that reason that the liturgy first states the meaning of baptism, the one and only meaning irrespective of the age of the person receiving the rite. After the statement of that meaning the office for the administration of baptism addresses itself to the class of persons who are to receive the sacrament. No qualification of the essential *meaning* of baptism is given in these particularized sections, however, for, we repeat, the meaning of baptism is always the same.

The meaning of this sacrament is that God has cleansed us from our sins through the Lord Jesus Christ. An elaboration of this teaching is beautifully expressed in the liturgical *Office for the Administration of Baptism*, in Lord's Day XXVI and XXVII of the *Heidelberg Catechism* and in article XXXIV of the *Belgic Confession of Faith*. As therein described baptism signifies our sinfulness before God, the covenant of grace which he has established with his people, adoption as children of God, cleansing in the blood of Christ and union with him in his death and resurrection, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and our obligation to live in loving obedience to God. Whenever baptism is administered, this is the meaning of the rite.

That this is the position taken in the liturgical office of the Reformed Church in America we have already observed. The first section of the liturgy, which speaks about the rich significance of baptism, is not only meant for adults but for children as well and is read very properly on the occasion of infant baptism. All of the blessings signified by baptism are meant for the lambs of the flock as well as its older members for they too need salvation.

The person chiefly responsible for our liturgy was Peter Dathenus, a Dutch minister who labored in the third quarter of the sixteenth century. Dathenus, president of the Synod of Wesel (1568), was the leading figure in the Netherlands Reformed Church at the time of its formation. He had lived and labored in Geneva, England and the Palatinate and was in touch with the other leaders of the Reformed churches. Dathenus shows clearly in his other writings his appreciation for the rich significance of infant baptism. He states that the children of believers, as well as believers themselves, must be numbered among God's people and that to do otherwise is to do violence to the covenant. Being numbered with the believers makes them, by God's grace, recipients of covenant blessings. "The children of Christians have this saving fellowship unto eternal life with the eternal and true God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and are for this reason called holy. Therefore the children of Christians shall and must also properly be baptized."⁷ Children have eternal life in Christ because they are "members of the body of which Christ is the Saviour." They, i.e. children, "receive the truth of the covenant, namely, cleansing or forgiveness of sins, through the blood of Jesus Christ." In his interpretation of Acts 2:38f., Dathenus stated that if the promise only had reference to the future it would have little significance for infant baptism, but it actually has great significance: "He (Peter) did not say, if they come of age and accept the promise, then the promise shall also be given to your children. But he spoke of the *present* time, the promise is to you and to your children." Ac-

cording to Kramer, Dathenus' argument for infant baptism is predicated on the fact that children receive the same blessings that adults receive. "The children of the faithful are received in grace as children of God, have forgiveness of sins, the Spirit of sanctification and the witness of eternal salvation." Having received those spiritual blessings, they are entitled to that which symbolizes them. "As long as our children, as well as ourselves, have received the Spirit of acceptance, of sonship, of sanctification, of salvation, they can be denied that water (of baptism) as little as we."

II

Having observed the position of the chief author of the liturgy of our Reformed Church, we regress to Calvin's teaching. Baptism, to him, meant what it did to his disciple, Dathenus. Briefly, it means forgiveness of sins and regeneration with the latter consisting of the new birth plus subsequent growth in grace.⁸ That this is also the significance of the rite, when administered to children, is plain from many places in his writings.⁹ In the argument in the *Institutes* the author avers that "The Lord, by the power of his Spirit, incomprehensible to us, renovates" elect infants who have "received the sign of regeneration" and die in childhood.¹⁰ If they live to years of accountability they will be "the more inflamed." Although infants are too young to understand, "they are baptized into future repentance and faith; for though these graces have not yet been formed in them, the seeds of both are nevertheless implanted in their hearts by the secret operation of the Spirit."¹¹ Baptism which Scripture calls "the washing of regeneration and renewing," may, like circumcision, "which was the sign of regeneration," be given to children because they too "are capable of being regenerated and renewed."¹² Again, baptism is called "a sign of our spiritual regeneration by which we are born again as the children of God."¹³

It is evident from these passages that Calvin's conception of the significance of infant baptism is no mere recognition of the covenant. It is that but also much more than that, standing for those spiritual blessings which are mediated by the Spirit through the covenant. Infants, "who are justly considered as part of the Church,"¹⁴ are entitled to its ordinances. Since the Lord promises them his mercy, "why refuse them the sign which is so far inferior to the thing signified?"¹⁵ Elsewhere Calvin writes, "Assuredly baptism were not in the least suitable to them were their salvation not already included in the promise, 'I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.' For they do not become the sons of God through baptism; but because they are heirs of adoption, in virtue of the promise, therefore the church admits them to baptism."¹⁶ Calvin's attitude towards covenant children was that they are the Lord's; he has adopted and given them his Spirit. "We ought therefore to consider that, as in the case of Abraham, the father of the faithful, the righteousness of faith preceded circumcision, so today in the children of the faithful; the gift of adoption is prior to baptism."¹⁷ "God adopts the children together with the fathers; and so, consequently, the grace of salvation may be extended unto those who are as yet unborn."¹⁸

In his office for administering baptism written for the church in Geneva Calvin refers to I Cor. 7:14 which teaches, "that God sanctifies them (infants) from their

mother's womb, to distinguish them from the children of pagans and unbelievers."¹⁹ In the liturgical prayer there is a petition that God may forgive the child's "original sin of which all the race of Adam are guilty, and," so the prayer reads, "thereafter sanctifying it by thy Spirit in order that when it shall arrive at years of discretion it may recognize and adore thee."²⁰

The most striking statement of Calvin that we have come across in our investigation is the following: "The offspring of believers are holy because their children, while yet in the womb, before they breathe the vital air, have been adopted into the covenant of eternal life. Nor are they brought into the church by baptism on any other ground than because they belonged to the body of the Church before they were born. He who admits aliens to baptism profanes it . . . For how can it be lawful to confer the badge of Christ on aliens from Christ. Baptism must, therefore, be preceded by the gift of adoption, which is not the cause of half salvation merely, but gives salvation entire; and this salvation is afterwards ratified by baptism."²¹

Guido de Bres showed his conception of the meaning of infant baptism in brief in the *Belgic Confession of Faith*, a doctrinal standard of the Reformed Church. Article XXXIV shows no departure from the position which we have seen in Dathenus and Calvin. Baptism, which signifies cleansing and regeneration, is to be given children because "Christ shed his blood no less for the washing of the children of the faithful than for adult persons; and therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that which Christ hath done for them." His position is shown more completely in a work written against the Anabaptists²² and discussed at length in Kramer.²³ That adult and infant baptisms means one and the same thing is evident. "These two things we observe in baptism, namely, the sign of water used as a seal, and the body of those who have the truth of baptism, whether by means of faith (as the body of the mature and understanding ones), or by means of the covenant (as . . . children)." To both adults and children that which is signified is "the inward washing of the soul through the blood of Christ. To speak briefly, baptism signifies to us the forgiveness of our sins, and the death of our flesh which we receive in Jesus Christ through the communion which we have with him, in order that thereafter we may rise to newness of life."²⁴ He then argues that children can be regenerated; that they are young "does not prevent children also being regenerated through the power of the Lord which is to us incomprehensible."²⁵ Whereas the Anabaptists considered children free from original sin, de Bres said, "They are all under the curse except the children of the faithful who, accepted by God's grace and the power of the promises and the covenants, are saved from such corruption, consecrated and regenerated, although the corruptibility of their nature yet remains in them; therefore they do not have such rebirth from themselves, but through the goodness and mercy of God in Jesus Christ alone."²⁶ Kramer continues with other pages of quotations from de Bres to show the Reformer's insistence that God can and does work in children his saving grace.

Question 74 of the *Heidelberg Catechism* teaches the same concerning the meaning of infant baptism. Here too the sacrament means the same whether administered to children or to adults, for the blessings signified are

"promised to them (children) no less than to the adults." In his commentary on the catechism Zacharius Ursinus, its principal author, elaborates on his position: "First, all who belong to the covenant and church of God are to be baptized. But the children of Christians, as well as adults, belong to the covenant and church of God. Therefore, they are to be baptized, as well as adults Secondly, those are not to be excluded from baptism to whom the benefit of remission of sins, and of regeneration, belongs. But this benefit belongs to the infants of the church; for redemption from sin, by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult. Therefore they ought to be baptized."²⁷

III

In his exhaustive study Kramer traces the thinking of the leading Reformed theologians on this subject from Calvin to the end of the nineteenth century. Schenck²⁸ treats representative men in the early period of the Reformed Church and then confines his discussion to the American scene. The latter shows that the doctrine of Charles Hodge, B. B. Warfield and Wm. G. T. Shedd was the same as that of the Reformers. Those given the initiatory rite of admission to the Christian Church, of which they are already members, offer no infallible evidence of regeneration, since no one can read the heart, but they receive baptism "on the basis of a presumption that those admitted were the children of God." Adults or children, all are admitted on that same presumption. "All baptism is inevitably administered on the basis not of knowledge but of presumption, and if we must baptize on presumption the whole principle is yielded; and it would seem that we must baptize all whom we may fairly presume to be members of Christ's body."²⁹

Although he had no doubt concerning the meaning of infant baptism, Hodge emphasized the fact that children are not necessarily regenerated at the time of baptism; that may happen later rather than before the rite.³⁰ Shedd likewise states, "The baptism of the infant of a believer supposes the actual or prospective operation of the regenerating Spirit, in order to the efficacy of the rite. Infant baptism does not confer the regenerating Spirit, but is a sign that he either has been, or will be conferred, in accordance with the divine promise in the covenant of grace. The actual conferring of the Holy Spirit may be prior to baptism, or in the act itself, or subsequent to it. Hence baptism is the sign and seal of regeneration, either in the past, in the present, or in the future."³¹

There was great interest in our subject in the Netherlands near the end of the last century and that interest has persisted to the present. In his lectures on baptism Dr. Abraham Kuyper used the expression "presumptive regeneration" and strongly insisted that the blessings of the covenant "may and must be presumed" in children.³² Kuyper speaks of "presumptive regeneration" as being the ground of baptism, but later he did not use that expression.³³ Kramer was a student of Kuyper and his thesis is that "presumptive regeneration" is the ground for the baptism of infants or adults.³⁴ Although both Kramer and Kuyper erred in basing the sacrament on a presumption instead of the covenant promise and command of God, they were at one with the Reformed tradition in their contention that baptism carries the same meaning

when given to infant or adult, forgiveness of sins and regeneration. *The Conclusions of Utrecht*, adopted by the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands in the first decade of our century, adopt the expression as well as the idea of presumptive regeneration, although they deny that it is the ground of baptism, and reassert the fact that baptism signifies the same covenant blessings for the child that it does for the adult.³⁵

There are, of course, those within the Reformed tradition who would disagree with our thesis as set forth in this article.³⁶ That they differ from the men who wrote our creeds and liturgy we have shown. To most Reformed scholars who have given attention to this subject baptism has but one meaning, inclusion within the covenant community and its attendant blessings applied by the Holy Spirit, forgiveness of sins and regeneration. Where the age of the recipient makes repentance and faith possible, they are presupposed before baptism is administered; where the recipient is too young to exercise such spiritual gifts, his inclusion within the favored community is sufficient. But in either instance the meaning of the sacrament is the same; it signifies and seals to us God's grace.³⁷

It is no small comfort to Christian parents to be assured that God is the Father of their children, that, although they are inheritors of a sinful nature, they have been "received unto grace in Christ baptized as heirs of the kingdom of God and his covenant."³⁸ The Christian parent, in presenting his child for baptism, may believe that God is the God of his seed also. He knows that his child needs salvation but he knows also that by grace his child is "holy," as the Apostle states. He believes that, contingent upon his own faithfulness in discharging his covenant obligations, God will bring his child to everlasting life. "The reason why there is not an infallible connection between infant baptism and regeneration, when the infant lives to years of discretion, so that all baptized children of true believers are regenerated without a single exception, is the fact that the covenant is not observed on the human side with absolute perfection."³⁹ In their greatest responsibility and most precious privilege many parents fail. God is faithful, but we are not. Human failure, however, does not alter the meaning of the sacrament of baptism. In it God still seals to us and to our children his grace. Believing that, the Puritan mother could sing to her child:

Whilst thus thy lullaby I sing,
For thee great blessings ripening be;
Thine eldest brother is a King,
And hath a kingdom bought for thee.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep.⁴⁰

1. Karl Barth, *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism* (London: SCM Press, 1948; English Translation by E. A. Payne).
2. Pierre Ch. Marcel, "Le Baptême: Sacrement de l'Alliance de Grace," *La Revue Reformée*, (October, 1950), p. 5.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 8 (footnote). 4. "... puisse être différé..."
5. Translated from *The Presbyterian World* (September, 1951), pp.110ff (italics mine).
6. *The Meaning of Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Society for Reformed Publications, 1951), p. 43.
7. This and the following quotations from Dathenus are taken from G. Kramer, *Het Verband van Doop en Wedergeboorte* (Breukelen: Uitgevers Maatschappij "De Vecht," 1897), pp. 212ff.
8. "Catechismus Ecclesiae Genevensis: Hoc Est Formula Erudiendi Pueros in Doctrina Christi," Autore Ioanne Cal-

- A. Schwetschke et Filium, 1867), Vol. VI, p. 118. Cf. vino: 1545. *Corpus Reformatorum*, (Brunsvigae: Abud G. "Acta Synodi Tridentinae: Cum Antidoto per Ioann. Calvinum" 1547. *Op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 426.
9. An excellent collation of such texts is found in Kramer, *op. cit.*, pp. 114ff; and in Lewis B. Schenck, *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant: An Historical Study of the Significance of Infant Baptism in the Presbyterian Church in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 7ff.
 10. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1932; English Translation by John Allen) IV, xvi, 21.
 11. *Ibid.*, IV, xvi, 20. 12. *Ibid.* 13. *Ibid.*, IV, xvi, 30.
 14. *Ibid.*, IV, xvi, 22. 15. *Ibid.*
 16. "Articuli a Facultate Sacrae Theologiae Parisiensi Determinati Super Materis Fidei Nostrae Hodie Controversis: Cum Antidoto." Per Ioann. Calvinum; 1544. *Corpus Reformatorum*, Vol. VII, pp. 7f.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
 18. John Calvin, *Commentary Upon The Acts of the Apostles*, 3:25, *in loco*.
 19. "La Forme D'Administrer Le Baptême," as found in "La Forme Des Prières et Chantz Ecclesiastiques, avec La Maniere D'Administrer Les Sacramens et Consacrer Le Mariage, Selon La Coustume De L'Eglise Ancienne." Per Ioann. Calvinum; 1542. *Corpus Reformatorum*, Vol. VI, p. 188.
 20. *Ibid.*, pp. 188f.
 21. "Appendix Libelli Adversus Interim Adultero-Germanum, in Qua Refutat Ioannes Calvinus Censuram Quendam Typographi Ignoti, De Parvulorum Sanctificatione, et Muliebri Baptismo," per Ioann. Calvinum, 1550. *Corpus Reformatorum*, Vol. VII, p. 677.
 22. *De Woort, den oorspronck, ende het Fundament der Wederdoopten* (publisher unknown; probable first publication date, 1570).
 23. *Op. cit.*, pp. 201ff. 24. *Ibid.*, p. 202. 25. *Ibid.*, pp. 206f.
 26. *Ibid.*, p. 208.
 27. *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, (Cincinnati: T. P. Bucher, 1851), p. 366.
 28. Lewis B. Schenck, *op. cit.*, cf. pp. 130ff. The thesis of Schenck's work is that the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches consider covenant children to be regenerated. "Presumptive regeneration" is the constantly recurring expression.
 29. B. B. Warfield, *Studies in Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 390.
 30. Lewis B. Schenck, *op. cit.*, pp. 137, 143.
 31. Wm. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), Vol. II, p. 575.
 32. Abraham Kuyper, *Dictaten Dogmatiek* (Grand Rapids: J. B. Hulst, n.d.), Vol. IV, pp. 139ff.
 33. L. Berkhof, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1941), p. 639.
 34. *Op. cit.*
 35. The National Synod of the Reformed Church of France last year stated that baptism is "the sign and seal of the new life in the fellowship of Jesus Christ," that it signifies being dead and raised with Christ and cleansed from sin in him. This is its significance when administered to adults or to infants. *The Presbyterian World*, (September, 1951), pp. 110ff.
- Pierre Ch. Marcel, *op. cit.*, sets forth the same idea, pp. 107ff; 169ff. This recent study is a clear statement of what we consider to be the historic Reformed position. In the matter of presumptive regeneration the author holds, with the Conclusions of Utrecht, that it is an effect of the covenant of grace rather than the ground of baptism. "On ne peut baptiser sur la base d'une presumption! (One cannot baptize on the ground of a presumption!)" p. 152.
36. The best discussion that we have seen is by William Cunningham, an author for whom we have the highest regard: *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1862), pp. 245ff., "Zwingli and the Doctrine of the Sacraments." Cunningham, like Zwingli, distinguishes between the meaning of baptism when administered to adults and to children. The New Testament gives us a clear picture of the meaning of adult baptism; but, says Cunningham, "There is a great difficulty felt, — a difficulty which Scripture does not afford us adequate materials for removing, in laying down any distinct and definite doctrine as to the bearing and efficacy of baptism in the case of infants, to whom alone, ordinarily, we see it administered." p. 246.
 37. Cf. John Murray, "Christian Baptism," *The Westminster Theological Journal* (November, 1951), pp. 40ff.
 38. "The Office for the Administration of Baptism," *The Liturgy of the Reformed Church in America*.
 39. Wm. G. T. Shedd, *op. cit.*, p. 578.
 40. Quoted from W. F. Flemington, *The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism*, (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), pp. 143f.

The Bible and Human Justice

In Recent Discussions

HERMAN J. RIDDER

"The whole world is crying out for justice."¹ In a time when wrong is done in the name of the right, when the perverting of the principle of justice has become the order of the day, it is only natural that such a cry should arise. The cry has arisen, says Brunner, because our Western idea of justice has disintegrated. The process began in the Age of Reason. First, the divine law of nature, the objective standard of justice became the subjective law of reason, soon becoming the individualistic notion of the subjective rights of man. Later, following the same pattern, the element of "nature" in law was reinterpreted in a naturalistic sense. The historicism of the Romantic period then declared war on a timelessly valid justice, replacing it with a conception of justice as a historical growth. But the capstone of the entire process came with the positivism of the nineteenth century which denied the metaphysical and superhuman, dissolving the idea of justice by proclaiming the relativity of all views of justice.

From that point on, justice was stripped of all divine dignity and the view that justice was only relative became the dogma of the jurists. Men no longer believed in an eternal order of justice that transcended human legislation; the difference between right and wrong became a mere convention and law was the product of the power in authority. Moreover, the idea of justice had been reduced to a "mere husk" by the complete codification of law at the beginning of the nineteenth century, after which it meant only a demand for a system without contradiction in form but also without value as a criterion in substance.²

That was the denial of an eternal order of justice, but it remained for the totalitarian state, void of all religious scruples and free from the traditional idea of justice, to carry out this theory into tragic experience. "The totalitarian state is simply and solely legal positivism in political practice, the abrogation in actual fact of the classical and Christian idea of a divine law of

nature'.³ If there is no justice that stands higher than the state, then the state can make what laws it likes, limited only by its power to carry them out in force. The totalitarian state is not simply a criminal gang invention but the ultimate consequence of man's loss of faith in a divine law and an eternal justice.

Let us set the problem clearly before us. Either there is a justice that stands above us all and binds every state and system of law, or there is no justice but only power organized in one fashion or another and claiming itself to be law. Either there is a sacred law which can be appealed to against every form of injustice, and every form of cruelty on the part of the state, or sacred law is nothing more than the expression of a force that happens to be in power.

But if there is no sacred law, no eternal order of justice, there is no possibility of denouncing any form of government or law as unjust. "If the positivistic theory is right, there is no possibility of waging war against the totalitarian state."⁴ We may say the system does not appeal to us but we cannot say it is unjust!

In the face of all of this, what can the Church say, on the basis of the Bible, concerning the reconstruction of human law and justice? What is the relation of the Bible to human law and justice? This is the burning question in Europe today and the cause for several books on the subject by theologians such as Aulen, Barth and Brunner. It was also the subject of discussion at a recent Ecumenical Study Conference in Treysa, Germany. We shall occasionally refer to the results of this conference study.

There are, of course, theologians who maintain that the Bible cannot be considered as the supreme authority. They believe that the Bible's authority is restricted to its message concerning man's salvation through Jesus Christ. In addition, they say, there are some ethical rules which, however, in no way can be described as being eternally valid. It must be admitted that if Biblical commandments were to be literally applied to certain realms of our modern society, the results would be disastrous. But our concern will be with those theologians who have felt the Bible to be relevant to our problem of justice and have dealt with it according to that belief.

C. H. Dodd, among others, has advanced the idea that the concept of natural law should replace any attempt to deduce ethical rules from the Bible. This concept of natural law, he says, is supported by the Bible. The Jewish rabbis, Dodd says, had a "doctrine of Noahian precepts" which was equivalent to the Stoic doctrine of the Law of Nature.⁵ (Nature, the Stoics said, is identical with reason, thus the right order of human social relations underlies social life itself; but man as a rational being has also an intuitive knowledge of justice, and it is by means of this knowledge that he is able to discover natural laws in actual social life.)⁶ Professor Dodd also quotes such passages as Amos 1 and 2 which suggest that even the heathen have God-given moral standards.

Dr. Otto Piper calls this attempt to prove that the Bible supports this concept of the Stoic idea of natural law one of the most amazing developments in the history of theology.⁷ "The world view we find in the Bible is theocentric from beginning to end. In the Old Testament God enacts all the laws of Israel personally as he

has made all things in this world . . . Equally futile are the attempts to discover the Stoic 'Law of Nature' in the New Testament. When Paul speaks, for instance, of 'the invisible things of God which from the creation of the world are perceived by the creatures in a rational way' (Rom.1:20), he shares the view that all men are capable of knowing God. But that is possible not because God and nature are identical, as Stoicism held, but rather because God has manifested to man's mind his eternal power and transcendence (verse 21)."⁸

At the opposite pole from Professor Dodd stands Karl Barth who strongly rejects any suggestions concerning natural law. His approach to the problem of law and justice has been called a "Christological approach." The Bible, for Barth, is exclusively the message of God's salvation in Jesus Christ. There is no other revelation of God besides this message. Every revelation of God must be understood as a part of the revelation in Christ; else it has no meaning and, therefore, is no revelation. Consequently, the so-called orders of Noah (Gen.9) by which the Creator sustains this fallen world has significance only in and through Christ. Justice, then, must be derived from justification. Any attempt to develop an abstract idea of human justice, according to this view, would be utterly senseless. Human justice should be moulded on analogy with God's justice revealed in Christ. The message we find in the Bible concerning Jesus Christ can, according to Barth, be applied to ethical problems only by way of such analogy. Ethical commandments found in the Bible are only examples of such analogies, and, although we can learn much from them, they are not to be applied literally.⁹

But there is another way of interpreting the Bible with reference to this question that stands somewhere between Dodd's concept of natural law on the one hand and Barth's strong Christological emphasis on the other. It is the position that was most widely held among the thirty scholars participating in the Ecumenical Study Conference at Treysa, Germany, August 2-7, 1950. (The theme of the conference was "The Biblical Doctrine of Law and Justice.") This position is what Wolfgang Schweitzer calls the "trinitarian" and "*heilsgeschichtliche*" interpretation of Scripture by which he means that the different acts of God in the history of salvation are here emphatically distinguished from each other.¹⁰ To understand this concept it will be necessary to have an understanding of the teaching of Scripture on the revelation of the righteousness of God. "God's righteousness, in the Old Testament as well as in the New, is in its very self the salvation of man (*justitia saluifera*)."¹¹ Professor G. von Rad interprets Judges 5:11, referring to the "righteous acts of God," as being acts of protection and guidance for Israel.¹² There is, thus, a close connection between God's righteousness and the salvation of man.

But this righteousness of God which brings salvation also brings a judgment upon both the Church and the world as a whole. God's act of redemption in Christ, who was crucified for our sins, is an act of faithfulness to the promise made to Israel, in that, in the new covenant, it brings to perfection the fellowship between God and man constituted by the covenant with Noah and later with Israel. This manifestation of the righteousness of God must become effective in the thoughts and acts

of those participating in the new covenant. As sharers in the divine covenant established in Christ, believers are placed in a new situation which the Bible calls *justification*. This new situation into which they have been placed must leave its impress on their whole manner of living so that they live in accordance with the love that God has commanded.¹²

Because of this manifestation of the righteousness of God, all human righteousness constructed on human achievement loses its validity and is consequently destroyed. The life of men, (which is life in communion with one another founded on communion with God), fell apart into separate and autonomous spheres, but is now restored to the fulness which God intended it to have. As Professor Van Oyen says, "In some unfathomable way this communion, both horizontal with men and vertical with God, is shattered, and sin and suffering have resulted; Divine justice seeks to re-establish in Christ the communion thus shattered, by his taking a share in the distress and sorrow of mankind (justification)."¹³

But what is the purpose for which God has given this new righteousness? He did so in order that he might constitute a people of God in which social relationships receive their true form, and the individual can grow up to that fulness of life which God has purposed for him. It is at this point that we receive an insight into the underlying unity of the Old Testament and the New. Under the new covenant, as well as under the old, we have a community brought into existence by God's gracious redemption, living under the law of love given by God, and moving towards a consummation which also is an act of God himself. The law of the covenant, which is summed up in the commandment of love, is identical in both covenants, but in the new covenant it has been transformed from a national law which was dependent upon an external coercion, into the law of liberty of a new race of men, guided inwardly by the Holy Spirit. Christ fulfilled the law perfectly as the head of the redeemed community, and can therefore work now as a power for the building of the new life of men.¹⁴

II

That, according to the *heilsgeschichtliche* viewpoint, is the teaching of the Bible on the revelation of the righteousness of God. The answer to this question leads quite naturally into a second question: What is the teaching of the Bible on human law and justice in civil society? The Treysa conference decided that our *knowledge* of the nature and function of human justice arises from our faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, a right understanding of human justice is possible only where the righteousness of God revealed in Jesus Christ is accepted by man in faith. Jesus Christ is the true and proper man as God intended man should be when he created him. The Christian, who is in Christ, has been restored and created anew according to that perfect image of God. Since human justice in the true sense of the term can only be that which corresponds to the nature of man as God intended him to be, the knowledge of what human justice *ought* to be can be secured only through faith in Christ.¹⁵

In these words the *heilsgeschichtliche* school admits that our Christian *understanding* of God's righteousness and of human justice arises from our faith in the Gospel

of Jesus Christ. But this apprehension does not imply that *ontologically* all human justice has its roots in the Gospel. On the contrary, the Treysa conference concluded that "God has not left himself without witness even among non-Christian peoples. Even among the heathen, and in spite of all corruptions, he has permitted his will to become effective through the institutions and ordinances of man's life in community. So even among the heathen, God's patience has preserved mankind from tearing itself to pieces and from dissolution of society in chaos."¹⁶

Although some Barthians accepted this thesis, it was a question as to whether Karl Barth himself would accept it since he is mainly concerned about the *noetic* aspect of the problem. The reference is made to God's "witness even among non-Christian peoples," which implies that there is some knowledge of law and justice even outside the sphere in which justification through faith is preached. However, it may be well to point out that as Christians we cannot regress to such knowledge that is gained from pre-Christian sources. This indicates that the *heilsgeschichtliche* interpretation of Scripture is open-minded towards the non-Christian conceptions of law and justice. On the other hand, Barth contends "that it is the preaching of justification which founds, *here and now* (italics mine—H.J.R.), the true system of law, the true state."¹⁷ But what would Barth's answer be to the simple question as to nations to whom this message of justification has never been preached? What about the nations that lived before Christ? Don't they have a relatively "true system of law," a relatively "true state"?¹⁸

Those who hold the *heilsgeschichtliche* interpretation of Scripture gave an answer to these apparent questions: God revealed his law before he revealed the Gospel in Jesus Christ. We ought not to understand this as though the law has no relation to Christ, but it means, rather, that human law and justice and the other "basic ordinances of the triune God, by means of which he preserves mankind in its transitory life on earth, set a limit to the power of sin and evil . . . but . . . do not set men free from the power of evil and . . . and therefore to be sharply distinguished from that office to which is entrusted the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins."¹⁹

Turning to eschatology, the conference report stated that "in accordance with the historical order of salvation appointed by God for men, human justice, as it is valid today, finds its place in the interval of grace between the first and the second advent of Jesus Christ . . . Jesus came to men in humiliation, in the form of the suffering servant of God. He did not overthrow the judgment seats of earthly judges; on the contrary, he submitted himself to them. Even now, as the Lord exalted to the right hand of the Father, he does not openly exercise his sovereign lordship over the world. He does not yet come forward in the exercise of judgment."²⁰ It is by means of this forbearance that he creates that interval of grace in which the Church is to exercise the ministry of the Gospel and it is also that interval of time in which the earthly authorities of crown and sword and judgment retain their validity, as an ordinance of the triune God distinct in character from the spiritual authority constituted by the Gospel.²¹

These earthly powers of crown and sword and judgment which neither derive their power from the spiritual body of Jesus Christ, which is his Church gathered

about Word and sacrament, nor belong to those powers which Christ bestowed on his Church, but they derive from the Word of God, the Creator and Preserver of the universe. For that reason the exercise of this power is subject to the will and the commandment of God and thereby its function is the preservation of the life of men "teleologically directed towards God's purpose of redemption."²¹ But even though these powers do not derive from the Church, the Church nevertheless has the obligation to criticize and to purify the concrete manifestations of these powers in historical situations.

The final judgment upon these powers will take place when "all the earthly authorities . . . will be swept away at the second advent of Jesus Christ, when the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords will himself judge the peoples with his iron rod."²²

The Barthians accept much of what has been written above, but they add the explanation that the law and justice, which are made effective in this interim period of the Church's activity, must be understood as having their source in the love revealed in Christ, and as tokens of his sovereign lordship over the world. This conception of the lordship of Christ is basic to the whole doctrine. But the question remains, the conference majority felt, whether the expectation is Biblical that human justice in this interval of grace is to be regarded as a manifestation of the lordship of Christ. Opposing the Barthian view, the *heilsgeschichtliche* outlook was that the Church's proclamation of the lordship of Christ must be understood as an active participation in Christ's present struggle for the kingdom which is to come in glory. "We must abstain both from false and enthusiastic expectations (as if human justice ever could become a manifestation of Christ's kingdom), and from quietism and pessimism (as if we had no task to fulfill in the dramatic struggle within history)."²³

It is the primary task of the Church, then, to bear witness to the redemption of God revealed in Jesus Christ. In New Testament times, the Church was composed largely of those who were subjects of the Roman government. Consequently, her influence upon human justice was exercised chiefly through intercessory prayer and righteous living. But from the very beginning, it has been clear to Christians that they have a responsibility in the sphere of government.

There are several ways in which the Church can fulfill her responsibility. Regardless of the circumstances in which the Church finds herself, she must insist upon her God-given *obligation* to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed. The power that forbids such proclamation goes beyond its competence and the Church must obey God rather than man, risking the possibility of suffering for righteousness' sake.

Again, the Church must fulfill her public responsibility by making her voice heard in prophetic criticism of social injustice and public policies contrary to the will of God. The law of the State never has the right to command what God has forbidden nor forbid what God has commanded. By the preaching of the Gospel the Church may at times cause the disintegration of pagan society. Where this is the case, the Church's responsibility is to help rebuild that society according to God's command.

Finally, it should be the aim of individual Christians to express as much of God's law in public law as is pos-

sible without using force or imposing on the public a greater demand than public opinion is ready to accept.²⁴ (Calvin's position was stronger than that taken by the Treysa conference. Calvin's view was that of a theocracy, or perhaps a "pistocracy," in which the believers legislate for both believers and unbelievers and have a divine right, if necessary, to compel the unbeliever to comply with the will of God.)²⁵

In lands where the Christian tradition is still in a measure maintained, it is possible for the Church to exercise a strong influence on public life. For example, Christian love—even for the sinner and enemy—can take some of the harshness out of public law.

In pagan lands, the influence of the Church is less. But even here the Church's witness is to be found in its own life as the Body of Christ. Eventually public opinion can be educated and laws modified according to God's law.

"The whole world is crying out for justice." As we began, so we end. We realize that the Church has often failed in seeking to make man's law express the law of God. The Church has not listened to the commanding voice of God and has often denied her vocation as God's witness to society. The Bible has a unique relationship to human law and justice! We must learn its message again and let it speak to our modern ethical problems. "Our hope . . . is not in what man can do, but in what God is doing. Our faith is that the God of love made flesh in Christ is the actual ruler of all peoples. When this world and all the problems of human order have passed away, His reign will be manifest in glory."²⁶

1. E. Brunner, *Justice and the Social Order*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945), p. 4.
2. *Ibid.* p. 7.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.* p. 8.
5. W. Schweitzer, "The Bible and the Problem of Human Law and Justice," *Interpretation*, (Vol. 5, No. 1, January 1951), p. 49.
6. O. Piper, "What is Natural Law?," *Theology Today*, (Vol. II, No. 4, January 1946), p. 460.
7. *Ibid.* p. 461.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Schweitzer, *op cit.*, pp. 48ff.
10. *Ibid.* p. 49.
11. *Ibid.* p. 53.
12. Cf. World Council of Churches Study Department *Information Bulletin*, (Enquiry A2), "The Bible and the Church's Message to the World," *passim*.
13. H. Van Oyen, "Justice Human and Divine," *Ecumenical Review*, (No. 4, Vol. II, Summer 1950), p. 355.
14. World Council Bulletin, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
15. *Ibid.* p. 8.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Karl Barth, *Church and State*, (trans., G. R. Howe, London: SCM Press, 1939), p. 44.
18. Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 55ff.
19. World Council Bulletin, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
20. *Ibid.* p. 8.
21. *Ibid.* p. 9.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 54ff.
24. These several ways in which the Church is to fulfill her responsibility are summaries of positions stated by the Treysa conference in the CII section of the Information Bulletin quoted above.
25. Piper, *op. cit.*, p. 467.
26. World Council Bulletin, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

In the Pentateuch

HENRY VOOGD

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is in a preeminent sense a doctrine of the New Testament. Our Lord enunciated it, his apostles interpreted it, and his Church gave it definite shape and character. Yet there is a sense in which it may be said that the doctrine pervades the entire Bible. One of the axioms of our Reformed faith is that it is nowhere altogether absent from the sacred writers' minds. This realization is confirmed as one focuses his attention upon the teaching of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, concerning the nature and influence of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrew life and thought, during the long period of which the Pentateuchal record affords a fragmentary portion, evolved some of the most exalted and permanent ideas of the human race. Among these, one of the most unique is the conception of the Spirit of God; for although, under some of its forms, it may have parallels in other literatures, regarded in its totality it is one of the peculiar doctrines of the Hebrew religion. It may have its origin in the common Semitic heritage of primitive ideas, but it shared in the unique development that made the Hebrews the religious teachers of the world. It is not a central, nor even a constant idea in Hebrew religion, but it emerged into prominence at several of the decisive crises in Hebrew history and kept pace with the development of the nation's thought.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

In beginning this study a few preliminary remarks are in order. First of all, the Hebrew word uniformly employed to denote "spirit" is *ruach* (an onomatopoeic word). The study of this term provides a fascinating and important subject of Biblical theology, and the ideas which cluster around it are the most characteristic of Old Testament ideas in regard to human nature. The root from which the noun is derived means primarily "to breathe out through the nose with violence." Thus the word in a derived sense has come to mean "the wind." While it progressively ascends in meaning in the Old Testament from the intellectual and emotional element in human life to the spiritual faculty, and then ultimately to the Spirit of God himself, yet its original identity with "the wind" is always essential to a full understanding of the various senses in which it is used.

It is often said, by those who have little studied the history of the usage of the word *ruach* in its chronological development, that *ruach* is simply another term for the breath-soul, a synonym of *nephesh*, though with a higher range of meaning. To say this is to neglect the important fact that *ruach* is not used for the breath-soul in man, nor with psychical predicates, in any pre-exilic passage. It is significant to note that the term *ruach* always retains the higher associations of its origin. The word, as used in the Pentateuch, stands for those more exceptional and unusual endowments of human nature which suggest God as their immediate source. It links man to God as though it were a door continually open to his approach. To the spiritually minded Israelite,

through his conscious life viewed in its highest possibilities, he was in touch with the *ruach* of God, the source of man's highest and greatest achievements. "It stands for power, for life, and it is of God as against of man."¹

A second preliminary observation is that the same Hebrew word is used throughout the Pentateuch for the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. This is at once an evidence of the peculiarly intimate relation which exists between the Holy Spirit and the spiritual faculty in human nature. So intimate is this relation that it is sometimes difficult to determine whether the sacred writer, in speaking of the "Spirit," means the Divine Spirit in his operation upon human nature, or the human spirit under the inspiration of the Divine. One can be assured, however, that whenever the phrase "Spirit of the Lord" (*ruach Yabweb*) or "Spirit of God" (*ruach Elohim*) is employed it signifies that special power by which God inspires the individual man, enabling him to do the will of God, and thus to perform those things which in his own strength he is wholly unable to do.

A third and final preliminary observation is that in the Pentateuch the Holy Spirit is uniformly considered in reference to God himself. In other words, he is considered relatively rather than absolutely. The Israelites lived in a period when the animistic conception of invasive spirits flourished abundantly in the atmosphere of Babylonian polytheism and demonology; but amongst the Hebrews of the Mosaic era this animistic conception of invasive spirits is transformed into the idea that peculiar and abnormal phenomena in human life and character must all be traced to one source, God. The important consequence of this unification is that the idea of the Spirit of God develops step by step with the concept of God's character. The idea of God was ever central and determinative in Hebrew theology. The Hebrews worshipped only one God, *Yabweb*, the God of Israel, and throughout the history of this exalted concept of God, the concept of the Spirit appears as the form of his activity, or as his supreme representative. The early Hebrew idea of the Holy Spirit changed with every development in the idea of God, man and their relation. The highest ranges of spiritual experience are thus conceived to depend on the cooperation of God. In the Pentateuch God is supreme and it is his *ruach* alone that changes human character and makes the impossible to be possible. Thus the words "Spirit of God" represent the common expression, and the phrase "the Holy Spirit" is not utilized by the writer of the Pentateuch. George Smeaton writes, "The designation 'Spirit of God' denotes two persons, God and the Spirit of God, like the analogous title 'the Son of God.' It implies distinct personality and indicates that He is from God, or of God."² One must constantly guard against reading too much theology into a single phrase and it is to be doubted that on the basis of this construct phrase alone such a conclusion may be drawn: however, in the light of other Scriptural revelation, it is a fact that can hardly

be questioned. In another extreme, others postulate that, since none of the passages in the Pentateuch mention the Holy Spirit by his own name this is evidence that these passages do not refer to the Holy Spirit as the third Person in the Holy Trinity but speak of God as One without personal distinction; and that the representation of God as creating anything by his hand, breath or spirit is merely a human way of speaking, signifying only that God was thus engaged. Our Reformed doctrine has always opposed this interpretation, and rightly so, on the ground that even the Old Testament, in its entire economy, bears undoubted testimony to the three Divine Persons, coequal, yet of one essence. As Abraham Kuyper has stated, "we gratefully maintain the traditional interpretation, which finds at least in many of these statements references to the work of the Holy Spirit."³ The Pentateuch contains no formal doctrine of the Holy Spirit; at some periods the Spirit played a prominent part in the national life of Israel, and at others he receded into the background. Nonetheless, a clear conception of the Hebrew idea of the Holy Spirit can be gathered inductively from a study of his appearance and activities.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CREATION

The first great truth with which one is confronted as he enters into this study is that the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, is the author of creative or formative energy, in short, of life. The work of the Spirit in creation and his perpetual presence and manifestation therein are subjects full of fascination and yet strangely neglected. So much attention has been given to the work of the Spirit in the regenerative aspect that the generative activities have been in large measure overlooked.

In the cosmogony of Genesis the Spirit of God is represented as "moving," or more strictly "brooding," as a bird over her nest, "upon the face of the waters," while as yet the earth was formless and void and darkness rested "upon the face of the deep." The verb, conveying the idea of brooding, signifies that the Spirit of God gave life and form to the dull matter of the universe and so approved himself the primary agent in evolving physical order out of chaos. The creation of order and beauty out of chaos in the universe was the work of the Holy Spirit at creation. It is through the work of the Spirit that God's creation manifests his glory and calls forth praise and gratitude from men.

The opening words in the book of Genesis introduce the earth while yet waste and void and declare that, for the accomplishment of the change from this condition to that of order, the Spirit "brooded" over the face of the waters. In the later story of creation the agency of the Spirit is extended to the whole framework and order of creation and other Old Testament writers recognize his operation in various parts of nature. In Isaiah 32:15, the Spirit is regarded as the regenerative and preservative force of nature, keeping it from destruction and preserving it to the day of consummation; and in Job 26:13 and Psalm 33:6, it is the Spirit that garnished the heavens and brought into being the denizens of the sea.

Thus it becomes apparent that in creation the Holy Spirit acted as the administrator of the will of God as expressed by the word of God. As the administrator of God's will the Spirit brings order out of disorder. It is by the power of the Spirit that cosmos was produced out

of chaos and by the continued active power of the Spirit in the processes of nature cosmos is maintained.

The language of Genesis 2:7 implies that the Holy Spirit operated similarly in the life of man. The Spirit of God breathed life in the first man, and likewise he breathes it into every man who is born into the world; and not only does he originate life, but he sustains it. Here again there are passages in the Old Testament which corroborate the Genesis account by making reference to the vitalizing and energizing power of the Spirit of God (cf. Ps. 104:30 and Jb. 27:3). From the Genesis account one may faithfully assume as concerns the creative or life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God, that he originated life and order in the physical universe, that he originated life in man, and that he sustains life in nature and man. One also recognizes in this record that the Holy Spirit stands in the closest possible relation to God himself. He is the "Spirit of God."

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF MAN

The Pentateuch also casts substantial revelation on the work of the Holy Spirit as the author of various human abilities and talents. Bezaleel, the maker of the sacred furniture and vestments for the Tabernacle, is the first conspicuous representative of this fact encountered in the Bible. His artistic skill is recognized as inspired by the Holy Spirit. "See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship" (Ex. 31:25; cf. 35:30-33). Not entirely so explicit, but similar in purpose and conception, is the passage where Moses, in setting apart Aaron and his sons for the priestly office, receives the following Divine admonition: "Thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to sanctify him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office" (28:2, 3). From these instances it appears that, although the Pentateuch does not regard all artists as necessarily inspired, yet it does in certain circumstances treat artistic skill as a form of Divine inspiration.

Administrative, judicial and military aptitudes are also recognized in the Pentateuch as being inspired and actuated by the Spirit of God. In a primitive society, such as that in which the Israelites existed, these functions are so often united in the same hands that it is not easy to ascertain which of them is implied when the gift of the Spirit is declared. As the early leaders of Israel were invariably judges and military strategists as well as administrators, it is now one aspect and then another of their lives that is conceived as falling within the influence of the Spirit of God. Joshua is a notable example. In the book of Numbers he appears as "a man in whom is the Spirit," and Moses is directed to ordain him by laying on of hands as one "who may go out before them (the congregation) and who may go in before them and who may lead them out and who may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as

sheep which have no shepherd" (27:17, 18; cf. Dt. 34:9). It is also recorded in the book of Numbers that when Moses found the task of governing the Israelites in the wilderness to be too great a burden for him he was permitted to associate with himself seventy elders in the discharge of the many arduous duties which fell upon him as sole leader. God said to him, "I will come down and talk with thee there (near the tabernacle of the congregation), and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone" (11:17). The record of the event is that "the Lord came down in the cloud and spake unto Moses and took of the Spirit that was upon him and put it upon the seventy elders; and it came to pass that, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied" (11:25). As a result of this special endowment of Divine power these men were able to do that which, in the ordinary way and by relying upon human resources, they were quite unable to do. This fact is clearly shown in the narrative. The sixty-eight elders who were gathered to the Tent of Meeting and the two who were detained in the camp all "prophesied" when the Spirit first rested upon them.

The latter reference also reveals a foregleam of the Holy Spirit as the author of the prophetic gift. While this unique work of the Holy Spirit is brought to full light in the later prophetic books of the Old Testament, the influence of the Spirit in the Pentateuch is habitually linked with prophetic utterance. In the passage cited above the "Spirit rested upon" the seventy elders and "they prophesied." It is also stated that "the Spirit rested upon" Eldad and Medad, who remained in the camp instead of going to the tabernacle, "and they prophesied in the camp." With respect to this aspect of the Spirit's work the story of Balaam is a remarkable one in that, while it is related that the "Spirit of God came upon him" (Num. 24:2), he is not called a prophet. In the book of Joshua he is called a "soothsayer" or "diviner" (Josh. 13:22). The natural tendency of the Hebrew mind was to look upon Balaam, weak and wicked man that he was, as being the subject of the Holy Spirit's action; yet the sacred writer shrank from classing him with God's true servants under the general head of "the prophets."

Thus, the Holy Spirit in the life of man appears as the author of special gifts or qualities. It is significant to note, in addition to this, that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Pentateuch is a doctrine of systematic inspiration. Underlying the record of individual bestowment there is the whole course of Israel's training to be the depository of a special revelation for the salvation of the world.⁴ For the achievement of this ultimate purpose the Holy Spirit endows individual leaders, such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua and many others, that they might become unique instruments of Divinity for the fulfilling of God's highest purposes.

CONCLUSIONS

The general teaching, then, of the Pentateuch is this: that there is a Spirit, Holy and Divine, who breathed his influence into the hearts of the Israelite leaders, who set the human soul in relation to its Divine Maker, and who is the interpreter of the Divine Will. These various op-

erations of the Holy Spirit are all, in turn, deducible from the creative or formative energy which is ascribed to him, as his special function, in the opening chapters of Genesis. He is the author of life, the author of energy, and therefore of intellectual and moral energy or ability in whatever form or manner it may display itself. The Spirit's creative work in man was in making all man's powers and gifts instruments for his own use, connecting them vitally and immediately with the powers and ultimate purposes of God. In the pre-Hebrew Age the Spirit is spoken of primarily as a life-giving energy. In the Patriarchal and Mosaic Ages the renewing and purifying power of the Spirit is intimately connected with the moral life of men and its attributes are revealed to the human consciousness as beneficially related to man's weakness and sin. Inherent in the moral government of God, which underlies the entire Mosaic system, is the doctrine of the Spirit, for a moral Ruler can only communicate with his subjects spiritually. The individual Israelite was conscious of the presence of a purifying, uplifting Power which he knew as the Spirit of God's holiness which was working in the depths of his being. He learned to recognize in it a force which was present everywhere, on earth and in heaven, searching out men's ways and throwing the light of God on the darkest recesses of their lives.⁵ Thus it is that the conception of the Holy Spirit in the Pentateuch is consistent and preparatory to the fuller revelation of his being in the prophetic and poetical books and eventually to the supreme revelation of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

As to the nature of the Holy Spirit in the Pentateuch, it is not so clearly a Person as an Energy. It is never presented under such categories as being, or essence, or substance. That would be a way of thinking alien to these early periods. In the words of T. Rees, "It is the divine working rather than the divine nature that the Hebrew Scriptures regard as spiritual."⁶ None of the passages in the Pentateuch absolutely express or imply the personality of the Spirit; rather, these early books were written in the Hebrew temper of ascribing action to Divine personality. In this respect the Pentateuch falls below the passages of the Gospels and Epistles. Not the personality of the Holy Spirit then, but the approximation to his personality, shadowy at first, but making a preparation for its gradual gain in strength and clarity in the remainder of the Old Testament is presented. There were in the Pentateuch germ thoughts which were destined to become actualities later in the Old Testament when employed in the service of higher concepts, and especially when supplemented by a new and greater channel of communication, namely that of prophetic consciousness, the rising into a higher moral consciousness of God. From the blade into the ear, and under the New Testament to the full corn of the ear; in all, and through all, there is the same Holy Spirit of God who energizes, renews, purifies and guides. In the instance of the Holy Spirit, as in many other instances, the lines of revelation in the Pentateuch were slowly converging toward an absolute eternal truth which reached its culmination in the New Testament revelation. The Spirit of God as shadowed forth in the early books of the Bible is not contradicted but completed by the wonderful passages in which our Lord taught the procession of the Holy Spirit

from the Father: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter . . . The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father" (Jn. 14:16; 15:26).

At the close of a consideration of the teaching of the Pentateuch upon the nature and office of the Holy Spirit, it is inevitable to remark how slow and yet how progressive was the Divine revelation. Such has always been the manner of God's working, not completeness, not the fulness of truth at once, but a slow unfolding of the sacred mystery, a dawning light which gathers strength and radiance until the coming of the perfect day. It is "at sundry times and in divers manners" that God "spoke in times past unto the fathers;" and the characteristic of his revelation is that the later truth which he teaches does not contradict but completes the earlier. It is as natural an issue or development of the earlier truth as the tree's highest branches are of its stem or of its seed. It is the end foreseen by God from the beginning.

1. N. H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London: The Epworth Press, 1944), p. 143.
2. G. Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Edinburgh:

- T. & T. Clark, 1889), p. 9.
3. A. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1900), p. 29.
4. R. A. Redford, *Vox Dei: The Doctrine of the Spirit* (London: James Nisbet and Company, 1889), pp. 21-91. A highly recommended source for a study of the doctrine of systematic inspiration.
5. H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1910), foreword, p. 3.
6. T. Rees, *The Holy Spirit in Thought and Experience* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 15.

WRITERS IN THIS ISSUE

M. Eugene Osterhaven, '41, is a member of the seminary faculty.

Herman J. Ridder is a senior of the seminary.

Henry Voogd, '44, is professor of Bible at Hope College, Holland.

Adelphos A. Dykstra, '38, is pastor of Trinity Church, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Elton Eenigenberg, '40, is pastor of First Englewood Church, Chicago.

John Den Ouden, '37, is pastor of First Church, Zeeland, Michigan.

Seminary Highlights

Dr. Simon Blocker, retiring Professor of Practical Theology, presented the address at the annual commencement exercises of the Seminary. The address to the largest graduating class in the history of the Seminary was "Christ's Commencement." The Rev. John Bruggers, retiring president of the board, led in the devotions. Inspiration through the ministry of music was provided by the combined Seminary Chorus and Adelpia Choir who sang "The Omnipotence" by Schubert and "The Spirit of the Lord Is Upon Me" by Elgar under the direction of Mr. Rogert Rietberg. Professional Record Books were again presented to the members of the graduating class by the Board of Education. The members of the class and their work which they will soon assume are as follows:

John J. Arnold, Owasco Church, Owasco, New York.
Austin E. Atwood, First Church, Bristow, Iowa.
William C. Bennett, Elmendorf Chapel, New York, New York.

James S. Boogerd, First Church, Monroe, South Dakota.

Peter J. Breen, Corinth Church, Byron Center, Michigan.

Warren Burgess, Forest Home Church, Muskegon, Michigan.

James I. Cook, graduate work at Princeton Seminary.

Rodger H. Dalman, Alsip Church, Worth, Illinois.

Gerard De Loof, Casnovia Church, Casnovia, Michigan.

Allan Dykstra, Associate Minister of Maplewood Church, Holland, Michigan, and graduate work at the University of Michigan.

Harold E. Dykstra, under appointment of the Board of Domestic Missions to Macy, Nebraska.

Robert A. Folkert, Eddyville Church, Eddyville, Iowa.

Joseph C. Holbrook, Jr., graduate work at Johns Hopkins University and pastor, Berdan Heights Chapel,

Fairlawn, New Jersey.

Peter Hsieh, expecting to return to the Far East.

Donald A. Lam, Montclair Church, Denver, Colorado.

Russell L. Norden, under appointment of the Board of Foreign Missions to Japan.

Lambert J. Ponstein, Hope College, Bible Department, Holland, Michigan.

Norwood K. Reck, Everglade Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Herman J. Ridder, Homewood, Illinois.

Wilbur R. Ringnald, Fremont Church, Fremont, Michigan.

Wesley Shao, returning the Philippine Islands to take up educational work.

John Smith, Melvin Church, Melvin, Iowa.

Donald A. Vandenberg, Fellowship Church, Muskegon, Michigan.

P. James Van Dyke, First Presbyterian, Montpelier, Ohio.

Gerard J. Van Heest, Palmyra Church, Palmyra, New York.

Norman G. Van Heukelom, North Des Moines Church, Des Moines, Iowa.

Jay Weener, Beaverdam Church, Beaverdam, Michigan.

Peter Yff, American Church, Archer, Iowa.

The alumni of the Seminary held their annual banquet at Trinity Church, Tuesday, May 13. The Rev. A. A. Dykstra, '38, presided. Dr. Bernard J. Mulder, '22, gave the address on the subject, "What Shall I Cry?" The twenty-eight seniors, who with their wives or fiancées were the honored guests, were welcomed into the alumni association. The officers for the coming year are the Rev. Christian H. Walvoord, '37, president, the Rev. John Hains, '45, vice president, the Rev. James Baar, '45, corresponding secretary and the Rev. Henry Mollema, '10, recording secretary.

President of the Seminary, Dr. John R. Mulder, conducted the final chapel service of the academic year and honors' assembly, Friday, May 9. By faculty decision and selection Herman J. Ridder was awarded the H. J. Pietenpol prize which goes to the senior who has distinguished himself for academic worth, personal attitudes,

The George N. Makely prizes in preaching for the seniors were awarded to Peter Hsieh, first, and Norwood K. Reck, second for sermon delivery, and to Allan Dykstra, first, and James I. Cook, second for sermon content. By previous vote of the class the prize money was given to Wesley Shao and Peter Hsieh, Chinese members of the class.

"The Relation of Church and State" was the subject of the competitive essay in the area of Church History. Judges awarded to Middlers John Hesselink and Wilson Rinker the Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Vander Ploeg prizes. The George N. Makely prize in the New Testament Language and Exegesis Department based upon the examination paper submitted in the Course on Romans was divided between Sylvio Scorza, first, and John Hesselink, second.

"The Perfected Work of Christ as Revealed in Hebrews" was the contest subject for the Junior class in their English Bible course. The Louis A. De Kleine prizes were received by Cecil Martens and Eugene Heideman. The prizes in Old Testament Language and Exegesis given by George N. Makely were based upon the examination papers submitted throughout the year. Eugene Heideman and James Hakken took these awards.

The final event of the chapel service was the presentation of a \$65.00 gift certificate by the student body to retiring professor, Dr. Simon Blocker.

Twelve New Brunswick seminarians were entertained by Western Seminary in the annual Reformed Church in America intra-seminary convale, April 3-6. The theme of the conference was "The Church's Responsibility." The Friday afternoon panel discussion was conducted by Herman Ridder who introduced the particular topics under the general theme. Six New Brunswick men and three Western men led the audience of seminarians to think about the Church's responsibility to itself in worship, the responsibility to the congregation in the educational program, and the responsibility to the community in evangelism. Floyd Goulooz directed the evening discussion along the lines of the Church's responsibility to the denominational paper, of an evaluation of the Reformed Church in the training of its ministers, and of foreign missions. The frank, stimulating questions from the audience and the earnest desire of the discussion speakers to reach the heart of the problems made these panel discussions exceedingly worth while.

Professor Richard C. Oudersluys conducted the communion service in the chapel for the student body and faculty. The morning classes of Friday and Saturday were visited by the New Brunswick delegation. Along in informal lines, the student body of Western became acquainted with the eastern seminarians at the Adelphic meeting Thursday evening, at the stunt party Friday night, at the picnic dinner Saturday evening in the Social Room of Zwemer, and at the students' homes where the New Brunswick men were entertained. The faculty en-

tertained at dinner in the Tulip Room of the Warm Friend Hotel Friday evening and a final social gathering was held in the home of President John R. Mulder Sunday evening following the church services.

Seven members of foreign missions' personnel participated in the Missions Emphasis Week which was held April 15-18. For the sixty Middlers and Juniors who were studying the foreign missions' course, the special speakers presented real life situations as illustrations of the techniques which were being studied. The call of missions came to everyone who heard the missionaries.

The Rev. Barney Luben, '29, Field Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions and at present acting Executive Secretary, was the moderator of the Adelphic meeting Tuesday evening. Lewis Scudder, M.D. of Arabia, Dr. Blaise Levai of India, the Rev. William Angus of China, and Dr. Edwin Koeppel of China were members of the panel. The Rev. Mr. Luben and Dr. Levai conducted the Tuesday and Wednesday chapel services. In addition to the ten class lectures, the missionaries were consultants in private interviews and conferences with individual students. Miss Janet Oltman of Ferris Seminary, Japan, was also a speaker.

The purpose of the week was to arouse mission interest among the students of the seminary. Not only for those who are under appointment to serve in the mission fields were the missionaries an inspiration, but also for the students who will take up parish work. It is evident that the success of much of the mission work depends upon the minister at home and the supporting churches. During Missions Emphasis Week, some students were challenged directly to go into mission work; others were challenged to accept the full responsibilities of supporting mission work actively at home.

Dr. G. C. Berkouwer, of the Free University at Amsterdam, scheduled an extra lecture in his busy itinerary at the seminary on April 23. His subject was "Developments in Modern Theology in Europe."

WITH THE FACULTY

Three members of the faculty will attend General Synod at Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania. Professor M. Eugene Osterhaven is a Classis of Holland representative; President John R. Mulder and Professor Richard C. Oudersluys are seminary representatives. Professor Oudersluys is a member of the Liturgy Committee.

President Mulder will attend the conference of the American Association of Theological Schools in Louisville, Kentucky, June 10 and 11. During August, the Brethren Church has engaged Dr. Mulder for ten lectures at a conference in Ashland, Ohio. He also will be at the Cedar Lake conference for the churches of Chicago at Cedar Lake, Indiana.

Upon the request of the General Commission on Chaplains, Professor George H. Mennenga will contribute four study outlines for the September issue of the magazine *Link* which are used by United Fellowship groups in the armed services throughout the world. The overseas study groups receive over one-half of the 116,000 copies.

Professor William Goulooz plans to resume his work at the seminary in the fall. We hope that the check-up in June at the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, will declare him entirely cured of his illness.

Book Reviews

The Kingdom and the Church, by Geerhardus Vos, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951. Pp. 9-103. \$1.50.

The author, who for forty years was a member of the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary, has in this volume given an example of what the Scripture records when it says of great men "he being dead yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4).

From the Table of Contents to the final chapter this reviewer was intrigued by the simple yet masterful way in which the author treats this great subject. In ten short chapters he treats the teaching of Jesus on the idea of the Kingdom, but not in any sense as though this subject can be comprehended in "ten easy lessons." The brevity of the book is not a fair indication of its thoroughness. Yet he has said what it has often taken authors many volumes to say and he has said it clearly. The whole impression is given that the subject has been considered from many angles, including many misconceptions which have been drawn as to the nature of the Kingdom.

The idea of the Kingdom acted as a rallying point around which several other elements naturally gathered in the teaching of our Lord, yet the author warns against modern attempts to make the Kingdom of God the organizing center of a theological system. In his opinion

"it is only with great artificiality that the various component elements of our Lord's teaching can be subsumed under the one head of the Kingdom."

Our Lord's teaching relates to two aspects of the same Kingdom—not to two separate Kingdoms as has sometimes been taught. For him there is one continuous Kingdom-forming movement which first lays hold upon the inward spiritual center of life itself and then sees it in connection with its external and visible embodiment. Among several errors against which caution is expressed is that of misunderstanding the spiritual invisible form of the Kingdom. Likewise does he caution against confining the internal spiritual Kingdom to the sphere of the ethical. We are reminded to look up to God that he may set up in us his reign even in that form which will be revealed through our actions. In our Lord's Prayer the words, "Thy will be done," explain the preceding words, "Thy Kingdom come."

In still another careful distinction he reminds us that the Kingdom consists in righteousness but is by no means coextensive with it; it consists in many other things besides. Forgiveness of sins, communion with God and other blessings are also a vital part of it.

A strong insistence is made on the Sovereignty of God in the view of the Church. Attention is called to Jesus' words addressed to Peter when he says, "I will build;" and again, "I will give." The Church is not founded on subjective belief by such a one as Peter or by any other subjective apprehension.

A very illuminating section of this volume clarifies the relation of the Kingdom and the visible Church. The Kingdom and the Church are not separate. The Church is the form which the Kingdom assumes at the death and resurrection of our Lord. Jesus plainly teaches us to identify the invisible Church and the Kingdom to the extent that it is impossible to consider being in the one without being in the other. Christ looked upon the visible Church as an embodiment of his Kingdom but not as the only outward expression of it. The Kingdom of God is intended to pervade and control the whole of human life in all of its forms of existence.

The final chapter is a recapitulation in seven summary statements of what has been earlier amplified in the several chapters.

This chapter might stand alone as a catechism on the subject. How often we have wished after reading other volumes, that the author had done what Dr. Vos has done for us here. It reminds us of a helpful if crude expression once spoken by an elder delegate to a Classis meeting. After listening to excellent but long and tedious reports of agents at the meeting of Classis, the elder who was a farmer by occupation took a parable from his own work and expressed the wish that after so much good hay had been cut and raked it might finally have been baled so it could be handled a bit easier. Dr. Vos has done exactly that in his concluding chapter.

—ADELPHOS A. DYKSTRA.

A Philosophy of the Christian Religion, by Edward J. Carnell, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952. Pp. 15-523. \$6.00.

The volume before us represents the attempt by a leading American Fundamentalist to present Christian truth in the form of a philosophy of the Christian religion. He modestly calls his work "A Philosophy," not "The Philosophy," and rightly so. As a matter of fact, this is not strictly even "A Philosophy of the Christian Religion," but an apologetic which tries to come out near the end of the book as a philosophy of religion. The positive, constructive thrust of a real "philosophy of religion" is nowhere in evidence. The author proceeds by a kind of *via negativa* through the various claims to truth that are found in the philosophical world, in each case finding the claim to be found wanting when measured by axiological criteria of an intellectual and emotional nature. Then also in each case the Christian faith is shown to have the values that make it pass the axiological test. It would have been a contribution of the first order if Carnell had begun his book with a propaedeutic on the question, "Is a philosophy of the Christian religion possible?" This question cannot be ignored, since it is one of the foremost theological considerations of modern times. One cannot simply write "A philosophy of the Christian religion," without the formality of establishing his right to make the attempt, as one might sit down and write a theology or dogmatics of the Christian faith. Carnell plunges *in medias res*, and the reader is never quite sure the ground is safe.

It is really only in Carnell's methodological principles that a "philosophy of religion" can be discovered, and his philosophy stands or falls according as these principles have, or do not have, validity. The heart of the matter is found in the author's confidence in "rational evidence" or "rational coherence." The main historical pedigree of this approach to truth begins with Aristotle's *Logic*, passes through St. Thomas Aquinas' *analogia entis*, and then Butler's Analogy, and comes into the modern world with many proponents on both the Catholic and Protestant sides. (Cf. De Wolf's *The Religious Revolt Against Reason*) By far the strongest opponent of this view today is Karl Barth. It is a bit surprising to find Fundamentalists advocating a religious epistemology which runs directly counter to the implications of their doctrine of sin, and that is exactly what happens in Carnell's book. The problem of evil is treated, not at all adequately, but the problem of sin has no place in this "philosophy" at all. The few references that are made to sin (and what human fact could be more ever-present) are so slight as to be of no consequence. If Carnell felt Barth too unworthy to be consulted in this matter, he might at least have pondered Calvin's profound observations on the noetic effects

of sin. Calvin was utterly opposed to the Thomistic *analogia entis*, the notion that there is some kind of abiding continuity between the divine and human minds, that one might, by taking thought, pass from the verities in human experience to the knowledge of the one, true God, using as stepping-stones a succession of value-judgments. If depravity was a total thing, grace and salvation must also be total. The deep chasm between man in his sinful state and God can be bridged only by an act of the grace of God. There is *no other way* from the one to the other. Of what value otherwise would be the entrance of Jesus Christ into the world to accomplish his redemptive purpose? Calvin thought of sin as being essentially of the *mind*, a perversity which pollutes and degrades the whole person.

That Carnell simply repeats the error of natural theology cannot be doubted. The following quotations should indicate this clearly enough. "It is hardly sagacious for the free self to pursue independence at the cost of defying those objective forms which define rational evidence itself. Unless faith is supported by a genuine authority, it will soften into an ephemeral expression of inwardness" (p. 449). One may well ask at this point whether faith continues to be faith when it requires the buttressing of something external to itself. The fact that rational evidences are often found to be in accord with the beliefs secured through faith is quite something else from saying that faith is come by and maintained by rational evidences. Again, "Cordial trust in Jesus Christ is always grounded in reasonable evidences" (p. 449). "If our knowledge of God were discontinuous with good scientific-philosophic inquiry, we would never know God at all. Faith in God is not generically different from faith in either another individual or in the body of scientifically veracious knowledge. Generic faith is a resting of the mind in the sufficiency of the evidences. Saving faith may go beyond this general expression, but it does not exclude it. . . . If Biblical Christianity rested on rational paradox or absurdity, it would quickly reduce to foolishness" (p. 450). Carnell seems to have forgotten that the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God are two different wisdoms, and are not continuous one with the other. I Corinthians 1:20, 21 makes that plain: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." One more statement of Carnell: "Only the understanding can finally test for error" (p. 453). This is prefaced by the contention that "the will has no authority to lead the heart into a commitment until it has first cleared with the understanding." We ask, Can the unregenerate understanding stand judge over the truth which the Holy Spirit brings home to the sinner? Must not God create a new "understanding" for this appropriation? Must not all things become new by a creative act of the Holy Spirit?

We shall close this review with some remarks on Carnell's view of the Bible. It may be said at this point that if a Christian scholar desires to write a "philosophy of the Christian religion," his view of the Bible in his total perspective of Christian truth ought to be carefully delineated, for this matter is crucial. Carnell, however, does not do this, and we are quite at a loss to know whether the Bible for him is a revelation which is truly *special* revelation, or whether it represents a body of facts which are coordinate with any other body of facts. We suspect he believes the former, but he speaks as if he believed the latter. For example, "The Bible is a system of propositions which address the reason as decisively as any other faculty in man" (p. 29). The Bible speaks of God and

presents the claims of God. These must be weighed over against alternative claims. "Wisdom dictates that one give himself to that which leaves him with the least disappointment, frustration, or regret. If one rules out the possibility of God as being a worthy authority whom man must trust, therefore, he does so on personal or moral, but not logical, grounds. If God is trustworthy, it would be irrational not to trust him" (p. 30). It appears then that the unbeliever may simply examine the Biblical propositions, and, discovering their worth for him, believe. "Revelation would be sheer gibberish if there were not an univocal, rational element uniting the meaning of propositions entertained by both man and God" (p. 306). Carnell does not explain how one can be rescued from sin, death, and the devil on this basis. Suppose some other book presented a scheme with greater rational coherence! Why not accept that instead? Carnell's advice would throw us into a relativism in which no salvation could be found. The *religious propositions* of the Bible, united as they are by the divine redemptive purpose are seen to be reasonable by the regenerated mind, but Carnell constantly assumes that the unbeliever stands on the same epistemological ground and therefore can see their reasonableness in the same way. It is this failure of his to distinguish carefully between the redeemed and unredeemed consciousness that renders his volume wholly unsatisfactory to the Reformed faith.

What is there of value in this book? When Carnell is bringing the various philosophies of the modern world under his searching gaze, he can help us. He has combined a reasonableness of the head with a reasonableness of the heart's interests to estimate the values which modern man offers his contemporaries. The chapter on the Roman Catholic Church (X) is especially fine. The author has a brilliant grasp of his material and displays fine erudition. His style is captivating, and often soars poetically, perhaps too much so for the nature of his subject.

— ELTON M. EENIGENBURG.

Communion Meditation, by Gaston Foote, New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1951. Pp. 176. \$2.00.

This book of twenty-five communion meditations by as many writers and compiled by Dr. Gaston Foote, minister of the Grace Methodist Church of Dayton, Ohio will prove to be a stimulus to the spiritual life of the reader as well as a means of developing a new appreciation for the Lord's Supper as one of the "means of grace," for the Christian.

In his preface the compiler states—I believe with some truth—

"In many of our Protestant churches the deeper meanings of Holy Communion have been lost. The observance of this Sacrament has too frequently become sterile, perfunctory, ritualistic and unintelligible. Instituted by Jesus Christ to stimulate and consummate a genuine unity among his followers, it has become the means of accentuating sectarian differences. It would be useless to assume that the recovery of the meaning of Holy Communion is the answer to modern Christendom's weakness. But to infer that there is no connection between the low state of our spiritual health and our lackadaisical methods of observing this sacred sacrament is to be blind to the facts of life."

After reading the various and varied meditations one becomes once again aware of the various shades of theological beliefs and becomes more and more convinced that while there is a decided need in our church life for a more effective observance of this sacrament the answer to the needs of our spiritual health does not lie merely in a more effective ob-

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servance, liturgically and aesthetically, of the Holy Communion, but with that also in a renewed and consistent emphasis upon the meaning of the cross of Christ and the significance of his death.

Although one does detect as he reads these chapters a sort of "inclusivism," which is the tendency of our times, and which would throw us all together indiscriminately at the communion table irrespective of our beliefs regarding the person and mission of Christ, he cannot help but feel as he reads that the narrow "exclusivism" of some regarding fellowship around the "table" is certainly far from the ideal and intention of our Lord.

One cannot read this series of meditations without coming to a new appreciation of the implications of Holy Communion. It is not always possible to give the nod to all the thoughts expressed in the chapters or agree with the positions of the writers. However, the reader's life cannot help but being en-

riched as he looks at the sacrament now from this position and then from another as he views it from the vantage point of the particular writer. One having read this book will lay it down with the feeling that he has been walking with other Christians in the presence of and in fellowship with God.

The book may well serve to stimulate the thinking of the minister as he sets out to prepare himself personally for the celebration of the sacrament, and it can well serve to stimulate him in his preparation as he seeks to lead his people to a deeper insight into fuller appreciation of our Christian faith as symbolized in the Lord's Supper. However, many of the values will be lost if this book is used as a substitute for personal study and industry and becomes a mere source book. Then it might well defeat its purpose.

This is a worthwhile book and one possessing it will turn to it often so that he may be "oft refreshed."

—JOHN DEN OUDEN.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Dr. Reuben K. Youngdahl, pastor of the Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Dr. W. F. Zuurdeeg, Professor of Philosophy of Religion, McCormick Theological Seminary, are the featured lecturers at the Convocation Conference, September 10-12. The final session of the conference is the Convocation of the Seminary for 1952-1953. Dr. Youngdahl, who is pastor of one of America's great churches, will present three addresses on Evangelism—The Motivating Power, the Use of Techniques, the Demonstration in Living. Dr. Zuurdeeg, a brilliant young Dutch scholar, will lecture on Communist Justice and Christian Justice, Communist Hope and Christian Hope, Communist Community and Christian Community. The plan is to hold the conference at Camp Geneva on Lake Michigan, where meals and lodging will be provided at moderate rates. Detailed announcements will be made later. The conference for the first week in August has been cancelled.

This notice will also serve to inform our readers that the Seminary is adding two weeks to its school year. Therefore the Convocation is a week earlier, and the Commencement will be a week later in May.

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